



Atty. Dkt. No. 053466-0365

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Hiroaki ITO et al.

Title: A PREVENTIVE OR
THERAPEUTIC AGENT FOR
INFLAMMATORY BOWEL
DISEASE COMPRISING IL-6
ANTAGONIST AS AN ACTIVE
INGREDIENT

Appl. No.: 10/677,227

Filing Date: 10/3/2003

Examiner: Prema Maria MERTZ

Art Unit: 1646

Confirmation 8597
Number:

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

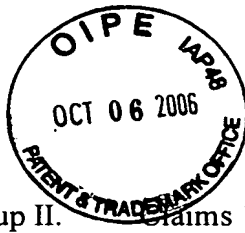
Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action mailed April 10, 2006, Applicants hereby provisionally elect Group II, Claims 14-19, 22, 24 and 27-37, for examination, with traverse.

Previously, Applicants elected Group II (claims 14-19, 22, 24-28, and 29-42) in their reply filed March 14, 2006. However, upon further consideration, the Examiner required further restriction of the claims in Group II, thus separating the claims into the following three Groups:

Group I. Claims 1-13, drawn to an antibody against IL-6 receptor protein classified in Class 424, subclass 145.1.



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Group II. Claims 14-19, 22, 24, 27-37, drawn to a method of treating or preventing inflammatory bowel disease by administering an antibody against IL-6 receptor, classified in Class 424, subclass 145.1.

Group III. Claims 25-26, 38-39, drawn to a method of suppressing weight loss by administering an antibody against IL-6 receptor, classified in Class 424, subclass 145.1.

As stated previously, Applicants have elected Group II, claims 14-19, 22, 24 and 27-37 for examination, with traverse.

The Commissioner may require restriction if two or more independent and distinct inventions are claimed in one application (35 U.S.C. §121). However, because this case is a divisional of a national stage application it is governed by PCT Rule 13, Unity of Invention, which allows for multiple processes possessing a single inventive concept to be examined together. In the present case, although the claimed subject matter may be classified in different classes, the inventions are not independent. Applicants believe that Groups II and III should be examined together, because their conditions are related and they are treated with the same antibody, thus the claims of Group III are common with the claims of Group II.

Applicants now await a first substantive action on the merits. Should there be any question regarding this application, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local exchange listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date October 6, 2006

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 672-5300
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By Alan P. Scheidter
Reg. No. 54,425
For: Stephen B. Maebius
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 35,264